



## **A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC**

### **Act F.A.S.T.**

*National Stroke Awareness Month - May 2017*

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*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Ms. Simmons] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Latoya Simmons.

Early intervention is key to preventing or treating many health problems. That's especially true with a stroke.

Dr. Mary George is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of getting immediate medical care for a stroke. Welcome to the show, Dr. George.

[Dr. George] It's good to be here. Thank you.

[Ms. Simmons] Dr. George, how many people have a stroke each year in the U.S.?

[Dr. George] Americans experience nearly 800,000 strokes a year. About a quarter of those strokes occur in someone who's already had a stroke.

[Ms. Simmons] Are they more common in the elderly?

[Dr. George] The risk of having a stroke increases with age. Nearly three quarters of strokes occur in people over age 65. The risk of having a stroke nearly doubles each decade after age 55. However, a stroke can occur at any age.

[Ms. Simmons] What are the symptoms of a stroke?

[Dr. George] Stroke symptoms usually occur suddenly. Sudden onset of weakness in an arm or a leg or the face drooping, sudden trouble speaking or understanding or confusion, sudden trouble seeing, sudden difficulty walking or trouble with balance, or a sudden severe headache. One way to remember some of the symptoms of a stroke is F.A.S.T.—F-A-S-T. F is for face drooping, A is for arm weakness, S is for speech problems, and T is for time. If you think someone is having a stroke, it's critical to call 911 right away. Stroke is a medical emergency and making that call to 911 can save a life.

[Ms. Simmons] What can we do to decrease our chances of having a stroke?

[Dr. George] About 80 percent of strokes are preventable. There are some things, like age and gender and family history that we can't change, but healthy lifestyle choices can lower your risk of having a stroke. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, and diabetes are major risk factors for stroke and it's important to have those conditions treated and managed. You can

reduce your risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and stroke by being physically active, eating a healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding heavy alcohol consumption, and if you smoke, ask your healthcare professional to help you quit. And if you don't smoke, don't start.

[Ms. Simmons] Where can listeners get more information about strokes?

[Dr. George] Listeners can go to [cdc.gov/stroke](http://cdc.gov/stroke).

[Ms. Simmons] Thanks, Dr. George. I've been talking today with Dr. Mary George about the importance of getting immediate medical care for a stroke.

The most common symptoms of a stroke include face drooping, arm weakness, and speech difficulty. If you or someone you know is experiencing any of these conditions, call 911 immediately.

Until next time, be well. This is Latoya Simmons for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.